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# Policy in Nicaragua 'egregious failure'

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An invasion of Nicaragua would cost 20,000 U.S. casualties, including an estimated 5,000 dead, a former Central Intelligence Agency analyst told a Portland audience at the Northwest Service Center Monday night.

David C. MacMichael, who resigned from the CIA in mid-1983 because of disagreement over U.S. policy in Central America, cited a Georgetown University analysis as the source of the casualty estimate.

Sponsors of his Portland talk were the World Affairs Council of Oregon and the Eugene-based Council on Human Rights for Latin America.

The gray-haired MacMichael, who marched in front of the U.S. embassy in Managua to protest U.S. support for anti-government rebels there, said Nicaragua is not arming to attack its neighbors. Rather, remembering a history that includes previous occupations by U.S. forces, Nicaraguans are arming to defend themselves against a U.S. attack, he said.

In contrast to claims made by the Reagan administration, MacMichael said, "Human rights are far better observed in Nicaragua than elsewhere" in Latin America.

## 'Nondescript policy'

"It is not going too far (to say) that this administration, in pursuing its nondescript policy in Nicaragua . . . has made this country . . . look petty, mendacious, arrogant and bullying" in the eyes of the rest of the world, he declared.

As an ex-CIA employee, MacMichael said, he must submit to the CIA the texts of his speeches or published articles. "The agency has been very fair in abiding by its own rules with me," he added, noting that "only one thought out of one sentence" was deleted by CIA censors from his prepared text.

MacMichael, who served as a U.S. Marines officer for 10 years including active duty in the Korean War, earned a doctorate in history at the University of Oregon and later was a visiting professor at UO before becoming a CIA intelligence analyst in mid-1981. From 1965-76 he was a researcher with the SRI International consulting firm, where he analyzed counterinsurgency strategy in Thailand.

## 'Egregious failure'

He said U.S. policy toward Nicaragua "has been an egregious failure" and urged the administration to "step back" and allow the Central American



DAVID C. MACMICHAEL

nations who are directly involved to work out matters.

"Really, the only U.S. concern is that no foreign military bases be established in Central America," MacMichael said.

He said many observers agree that U.S. support for anti-government rebels in Nicaragua, "far from weakening the Sandinista regime, has strengthened support" for the Managua government.

The vast majority of people slain by the U.S.-financed rebels have been civilians, MacMichael said, and a large proportion of the dead have been women and children.

"Our government — yours and mine — supports the equivalent of taking out three civilians (picked) at random each day, and killing them," he said.

"This is not the way I believe my country carries out its diplomatic (relations) with another country."